

SPECIAL ISSUE ARTICLE

## The Holodomor and Jews in Kyiv and Ukraine: An Introduction and Observations on a Neglected Topic

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### Abstract

The Holodomor in Ukraine from 1932 to 1933 was a result of the collectivization policy of the Soviet government and took approximately 4 million lives. The Holodomor had a profound impact on the entire population of Ukraine. It badly affected the lives of Jews in Kyiv and Ukraine, and it damaged Jewish–gentile relations for many years. The famine occurred not only in rural areas, but also in the cities and towns of Ukraine. The Holodomor provoked a significant migration of Jews from *shtetls* to the large cities, particularly to Kyiv. Many desperate inhabitants of villages and towns fled to the large cities where they hoped to receive some aid. However, the overcrowded cities could not accommodate this flood of migrants. Anatolii Kuznetsov wrote in *Babi Yar: A Document in the Form of a Novel* that if not for the Holodomor in Ukraine and Stalin's repressions of the 1930s, the attitude of the Kyiv gentile population toward the Holocaust would perhaps have been different. People had gotten so used to the suffering of others, victims of the famine and political repression, that they remained mainly passive, silent, and indifferent toward the mass execution of Jews in Babi Yar during the Holocaust.

**Keywords:** Holodomor; Jews; Kyiv; Ukraine; famine

During the last few decades, several works have been published on the Holodomor and its effect on the Ukrainian rural population, but the effect of the Holodomor on Jews in Kyiv and Ukraine is still an under-researched topic. There are only a few scholarly publications on the Holodomor and Jews, which I have used in my article.

One of the challenges of working on the Holodomor and Jews in Kyiv and Ukraine is the limited documentary sources, because Soviet authorities hid and denied starvation in the country. For example, doctors were not allowed "to mention typhus and death from starvation" (Klid and Motyl 2012, 281). I also use general scholarly works on the Holodomor, archival materials, press reports, and memoirs about the Holodomor in Ukraine. I argue in my article that the Holodomor had a profound impact on all the population of Ukraine. Previously, scholars have mostly focused on the impact of the Holodomor on the rural population, which suffered the most. I will show that the Holodomor also had a profound impact on the entire population in large cities and small towns. For example, it badly affected the life of all Kyivans, including Jews, who made up more than one-quarter of the population of the city, and worsened Jewish–gentile relations in Kyiv.

### Scholarly Literature on the Holodomor and Jews in Ukraine

Anne Applebaum only mentioned Jews a few times in her major work on the Holodomor *Red Famine: Stalin's War on Ukraine* (Applebaum 2017, 265–266). There are a few paragraphs about the Holodomor and Jews in the monograph by Paul Robert Magocsi and Yohan Petrovsky-Shtern,

*Jews and Ukrainians: A Millennium of Co-Existence* (2016, 58–60). An article by A. Naiman, “Evreiskoe zemledelie na Ukraine v 1930-e gody” (1995, 217–221), and a conference paper by L. V. Hutsalo, “Ievreis’ke naselennia USRR v systemi sotsial’no-ekonomichnykh eksperimentiv” (2011, 86–100), discuss the impact of the Holodomor on Jews in Jewish agricultural settlements. In his book *Kniga vremen i sobytii. Istoryia evreev Sovetskogo Soiuza (1917–1939)*, Feliks Kandel’ (2002) discusses the reasons for the Holodomor among Jews in shtetls and rural areas. Valuable information about the Holodomor is contained in the memoir of Naum Korzhavin, *V soblaznakh krovavoi epokhi* (2007), and the autobiographical fiction by Vasily Grossman, *Forever Flowing* (1970), and Vladimir Tendriakov, *Khleb dlia sobaki* (n.d.).

The American journalist Harry Lang and his wife Lucy Robins Lang visited the Soviet Union in 1933. Harry Lang shared his eyewitness account of the Holodomor in a series of articles in the American press (Lang 2011, 176–190), while his wife published her memories of the Holodomor fifteen years later in her book *Tomorrow Is Beautiful* (Robins Lang 1948).

The collection of documents edited by Bohdan Klid and Alexander J. Motyl, *The Holodomor Reader: A Sourcebook on the Famine of 1932–1933 in Ukraine* (2012) contains several documents on the Holodomor and Jews in Ukraine.

### Collectivization, Peasant Resistance, and the Holodomor in Ukraine

The famine in the Soviet Union was the direct result of the Soviet policy of collectivization and the confiscation of grain from collective farms and peasants. Were it not for this policy, the great famine would not have occurred. The state seized grain to sell it abroad for hard currency, because the Soviet leaders had begun to industrialize the country and needed hard currency to import technologies and machines. Also, the communists believed that without the collectivization of agriculture, they could not build real socialism in the country.

When collectivization began in 1928, the peasants resisted:

In 1928, the OGPU reported 1,027 incidents of terror and 709 mass disturbances.... At the end of May, the Soviet courts issued a decree expanding the categories of individuals against whom a crime could be considered a counterrevolutionary act, meriting the imposition of article 58. The decree noted that although terrorist acts were committed mainly by kulaks, there were significant numbers of middle and poor peasants involved as well. (Viola, Danilov, Ivnitsky, and Kozlov 2005, 62)

There were uprisings against collectivization in Ukraine, the Central Black Earth Region of Russia, on Don, Kuban’, Dagestan, and Siberia. According to the All-Union State Political Administration (OGPU), 9,093 uprisings of peasants and 1,307 attacks on the authorities occurred in 1929 (Zubov 2016, 177). In January–April 1930, there were 6,117 peasants’ revolts in the Soviet Union (of which 1,895 were in Ukraine), in which 1.8 million peasants participated (Zubov 2016, 178). There were 4,098 mass disturbances in the countryside in Ukraine in 1930 in which 956,587 people participated (Viola et al. 2005, 364). The authorities used troops to suppress the uprisings. According to Andrei Zubov, due to mass peasant uprisings in 1930, the fate of the Bolshevik regime was more uncertain than during the civil war in the Fall of 1919 (Zubov 2016, 178). Peasants were 82 percent of the population of the Soviet Union in 1926. Zubov called the peasants uprisings “the second civil war” (2016, 178). Andrea Graziosi wrote that this was the “greatest European peasant war” (1996, 2).

Per the resolutions of TsKa VKP (b) [Central Committee of the All Union Communist Party, (Bolsheviks)] from January 5, 1930, “the kulaks should be liquidated as a class” (Zubov 2016, 169). The wealthiest farmers, the so-called *kulaks*, and others who resisted collectivization were dekulakized<sup>1</sup> and sent to Ural, Siberia, and Kazakhstan. A total of 2.1 million peasants were deported to these remote regions. A similar number were dispossessed and relocated inside their regions. Among those deported and relocated, 1.8 million perished (Zubov 2016, 169–170).

Many years later, in August 1942, Winston Churchill met with Stalin in Moscow for discussions of their combined struggle against Nazi Germany. In an intermission between discussions of war plans, Churchill asked Stalin what was more stressful for him, collectivization or war. Stalin admitted that “the Collective Farm policy was a terrible struggle” (Churchill 1950, 498–499). Stalin told Churchill that he had to suppress the resistance of 10 million opponents of collectivization, that this resistance continued for four years, and he said that “it was fearful” (Churchill 1950, 498–499). However, Stalin believed that collectivization “was absolutely necessary for Russia, if we were to avoid periodic famines, to plough the land with tractors” (Churchill 1950, 498–499).

However, the Soviet policy of collectivization created the worst famine that ever faced the Russian Empire or the Soviet Union. This famine helped the Soviets finally crush the peasants’ resistance, because starving, exhausted people were unable to resist. The famine was very harsh in Ukraine (where it is called the Holodomor), because in Ukraine peasants most strongly resisted collectivization and did not want to work on collective farms. They were used to being individual farmers. Thus, in Central and Southern Ukraine, the harvest was poor in 1932, but the norms of the grain production were high. So almost all grain was taken away from the peasants. The famine in Ukraine was not only in Ukrainian villages, but also in Jewish agricultural settlements, as well as in small towns (*shtetls*) and large cities, in which all inhabitants suffered (A. Naiman 1995, 218–221). The famine also spread to the Volga region, North Caucasus, Southern Ural, Kazakhstan, and Middle Asia.

### **Jews in Soviet Ukraine Before and During Collectivization and the Holodomor**

Most Jews in the Russian Empire were petty traders and artisans. Discriminatory Imperial Russian laws did not allow Jews to purchase or rent land. So, Jews primarily lived in the cities and *shtetls*. Only 1 percent of Jews in the Russian Empire lived and worked in Jewish agricultural settlements, which were established on under-populated lands in the 19th century (Borovoï 1928).

The policy of war communism, which the Bolsheviks established during the Russian civil war (1918–1920), banned private trade and businesses. This policy undermined the basis of the Jewish economy. Most Jews who were traders and artisans were deprived of the right to work at their professions (traders and artisans were considered bourgeois). Bolshevik, publicist, and Jewish activist Abram Bragin wrote in his report in the beginning of the 1920s about the “economic catastrophe” in Jewish *shtetls* (Khiterer 1995, 212–216).<sup>2</sup> Bragin wrote:

The economic situation of the Jewish masses of the USSR is worsening every day. Private trade in *shtetls* and provincial cities is dead.... The artisan craft is dying....

Jews almost don’t have agricultural or industrial workers (a very few percent).

Therefore, **most of the Jewish population of the USSR is doomed to economically perish....**  
(Khiterer 1995, 213–214)<sup>3</sup>

Bragin complained that the local authorities had an attitude toward Jews as a “non-laboring element” (petite bourgeoisie), which made the situation of the Jewish population even more difficult. Bragin also suggested that taxes for Jews should be decreased (Khiterer 1995, 215).

The Soviet government considered the difficult economic situation of the Jewish *shtetl* population and concluded that it appeared due to the abnormal social structure of Jewry. So, the government decided to transform most Jews into industrial workers and peasants. Soviets authorities created two institutions in the mid-1920s for realization of the policy of the resettlement of Jews on the land: the Committee for the Settling Jews on the Land (Komitet po Zemel’nomu Ustroistvu Evreev, KOMZET) and the All-Union Association for the Agricultural Settlement of Jewish Workers in the USSR (Vsesoiuznoe Obshchestvo po Zemel’nomu Ustroistvu Trudiashchikhsia Evreev v SSSR, OZET). These institutions, with the support of Western Jewish philanthropic organizations, succeeded in resettling a significant percentage of Jews on the land. Among Jews who

resettled on the land were many who had been deprived of their civil rights as a non-laboring element, the so called *lishentsy*, and their children, who were deprived of the right for higher education. By becoming farmers these people obtained again their civil rights (Dotsenko 2014, 115).

Antony Polonsky wrote:

By the end of the 1920s about 20,000 Jewish families in Ukraine and about 10,000 in Belarus were working as farmers, and by 1931, 11.1 per cent of economically active Jews were employed in agriculture, and the number of Jews settled on the land now reached 126,000. A higher estimate puts their number in 1928 as 220,000. (2012, 292)

Soviet propaganda promised resettled Jews that they would live better on the land than in overcrowded *shtetls*, where many of them were unemployed and lived in poverty. However, in practice this often turned into “torture of the Jewish population” (Hutsalo 2011, 93). Upon their arrival, resettled Jews often waited for several days in train carriages or at the station: “Thus in February-March [1932] resettled families with children waited for twenty four hours in the frost at the station Sniguriivka ta Kalganivka.... Their belongings were laying on the station, part of them were stolen, and some other part used for hitting the train carriages” (Hutsalo 2011, 92–93). No place to stay, fuel, or medical aid had been prepared for resettled Jews in the agricultural settlements (Hutsalo 2011, 93).

The number of Jewish agricultural workers decreased in the Soviet Union by 1939 due to the collectivization policy. The Jewish agricultural settlements were collectivized, as were other rural areas of the Soviet Union. Jews who lived in agricultural settlements had a mostly negative attitude toward collectivization. Some of them fled. The authorities took measures to prevent the departure of Jews from rural areas. The Plenum of the Kalininsdorf District Committee of the Communist Party issued a resolution in 1931 “Regarding the struggle with mass deportation of the settlers,” which described the unauthorized departure of the members of the Dimanshtein Commune and the cooperative “Sparke.” The Plenum also discussed measures against increased *kulak* agitation and the need for purges of “kulak elements” from the commune and cooperatives (Hutsalo 2011, 92).

During collectivization, Jewish collective farms suffered from famine, as did the other rural areas of Ukraine. The Kharkiv newspaper *Der Shtern* wrote on February 8, 1932 that the Jewish collective farms of the Kherson region did not have bread even for their own farmers (Naiman 1995, 220). On March 12, 1932, *Der Shtern* noted that many collective farms of the Jewish Stalindorf district had not fulfilled plans for state grain procurement for the previous years, and these collective farms were not ready for sowing (Naiman 1995, 220).

The report of the Information Sector of the Organization and Instruction Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine pointed out the desperate situation of the Jewish farmers of the Voroshilovskyi Jewish rural council in Stalindorf district. The report stated,

... people stopped asking for aid, they lie down in unheated houses and wait for death. There are 14 cases of death from starvation in the village. In the same village, farmer Braverman's four children from five to ten years old lie down motionless in the house, swollen with open wounds, which indicate that they are decomposing alive. (Rudich 1991, 451–452)

The father of these children, Braverman, was arrested previously for stealing some grain from the collective farm. The report stated that in the same village, Voroshilovgrads'ke, 749 resettled inhabitants (Jews) had already died (Dotsenko 2014, 116).

Jews in the cities and *shtetls* also suffered from the Holodomor. Many Jewish artisans, who worked for the rural population, lost their customers. The farmers stopped delivering food to the *shtetls'* markets. The authorities reported that in the *shtetls* of the Vinnytsia region, there were many people swollen from starvation and there was high mortality. In the town of Nemyriv, there were seven cases of death from famine, in Tul'chin 47 cases, in the *shtetl* Ulanov, where most of

population was Jewish, by April 20, 1933, 35 people died from famine and 95 were starving according to the official report (Kandel' 2002, 290–291). The authorities also reported the number of deaths from hunger in Berdychiv. Before the revolution, Jews made up 80 percent of the city population (Lukin n.d.).<sup>4</sup> Due to the very high percentage of Jews, anti-Semites called Berdychiv the Jewish capital. During the civil war, the Jewish population of Berdychiv decreased, but Jews still made up a significant proportion of the city population. In 1926, 30,812 Jews lived in Berdychiv. Jews suffered greatly along with gentiles in Berdychiv during the Holodomor. According to the official report in 1933, 2,281 people suffered from famine in Berdychiv (Khandros 2000, 66). It is likely that the number of starving people was significantly larger than this however, because the authorities counted only severe cases of dystrophy and those who were swollen from hunger.

H. M. Sherber wrote from Berdychiv to the widow of Lenin, Nadezhda Krupskaia, that city inhabitants were starving and awaited death; she asked that they be rescued (Khandros 2000, 67). Krupskaia redirected this letter to the City Council (Gorsovet) with her comment that Sherber needed “immediate help,” which should be provided locally by the “Soviet public.” It was a quite hypocritical comment, because most of the local inhabitants of Berdychiv also suffered from hunger (Khandros 2000, 68). Ukrainian Jewish writer Borys Khandros (1923–2006) recalled that he starved during the Holodomor, as did all the other inhabitants of his native *shtetl*, Ozarintsy, Vinnytsia region (Khandros 2000, 63). In his book, Khandros provides the testimonies of several other Ozarintsy Jews, who said that during the Holodomor many in the *shtetl* were swollen from famine and some people perished. Some children were so weak from hunger that they could not go to school. Some Ozarintsy Jews worked at the sugar refinery in the nearby village Vedichany, where there also was hunger. Mikhail Torban, whose father worked at this plant, said that people ate cats and dogs, and even dead horses in the village. Among the starving people in the village were Ukrainians and Jews (Khandros 2000, 64).

Many desperate inhabitants of the villages and towns fled to the large cities, where they hoped to receive some aid, but the overcrowded cities could not accommodate this flood of migrants. Furthermore, according to the Passport Law of December 27, 1932, all city inhabitants received internal passports, while peasants were deprived of them until 1974 (Levin 1988, 266; Zhirnov 2003, 60). Without passports and local registration (established in the cities in 1925), they could not find a place to live or a legal job (Levin 1988, 266; Zhirnov 2003, 60). Those who did not have relatives or friends had to take up residence in the basements of apartment buildings, or lived on the street, and many of them perished from famine.

### The Flood of Migrants to Kyiv

In late Imperial Russia, Kyiv was very attractive for Jews as a large commercial and industrial center, where there were more opportunities to find a job than in the overcrowded *shtetls*. Many Jews settled in Kyiv legally and illegally during Tsarist times when the city was exempt from the Pale of Jewish Settlement. When the Pale was finally abolished after the February 1917 Revolution, the Kyiv Jewish population grew rapidly because many more Jews from provincial cities and *shtetls* moved to the city. Kyiv had one of the largest urban Jewish populations in the Soviet Union. In 1917, 87,240 Jews lived in the city, comprising 15 percent of the total population (Khiterer 2016, 422). In 1926, the Kyiv Jewish population was 140,256 out of a total of 513,637 (27 percent); in 1939, 224,236 Jews lived in Kyiv out of 847,000 inhabitants (26.5 percent) (Altshuler 1998, 277; Kudryts'kyi 1981, 22; Polonsky 2012, 275; Veitsblit 1930, 163). So, Kyiv had the second largest urban Jewish population in the Soviet Union after Moscow.

Kyivan Jewry changed rapidly in Soviet times. Before the revolution, most Kyivan Jews were only allowed to live in three remote districts of the city: Podol, Plosskii, and Lybedskoi. Only merchants of the first guild could settle anywhere in Kyiv. After the February 1917 Revolution, Jews settled in all districts of the city. The fast-increasing Jewish population, as well as the presence of Jews in city districts where they were not allowed to live before the revolution, greatly irritated anti-Semites.

Many Jews moved from poor remote districts of the city to downtown Kyiv during the NEP<sup>5</sup> period in 1921–1928, when the government allowed small private businesses. In downtown Kyiv there were good possibilities for business and trade, which made it even more attractive for Jews. There were many schools, universities, theaters, and businesses in downtown Kyiv, and so it is not surprising that many Jews preferred to live there rather than in the remote districts of the former Jewish ghetto.

The Holodomor accelerated the flood of migrants to Kyiv, as described in the memoirs of Naum Korzhavin, a Russian poet of Jewish origins who was born in Kyiv in 1925. Korzhavin lived with his parents in his uncle's house near downtown at 97-B Vladimirskaia Street (a ten-minute walk from Khreshchatyk Street). He explained how their five-room house filled up with their Jewish relatives. Before the revolution, only Korzhavin's wealthy uncle and his wife lived there, but in the 1920s–1930s four Jewish families settled in the house.

Korzhavin wrote in his memoirs: "Kyiv, and our yard in particular, was literally flooded by the wave of migrants from the province. They occupied all basements in the city" (2007, 99). He wrote that among the migrants were not only peasants, but also *shtetl* Jews, because the famine was in the *shtetls* as well as the villages. There was also a severe shortage of food in Kyiv and other large cities of Ukraine in 1932–1933, but the situation in the villages and small towns was even worse. The authorities attempted to stop the newcomers: they directed the OGPU to organize roadblocks in Ukraine, North Caucasus, and in some regions of Russia. The Head of OGPU, Genrikh Yagoda, reported to Stalin and Viacheslav Molotov that OGPU detained

... from 22 to 30 January 1933 24,961 people, who fled from the places of their residence, among whom 18,379 were from Ukraine, 6,225 from North Caucuses, and 357 from the other regions.

16,046 people were returned to the places of their residence, 1,016 were arrested; the remaining 7,879 are still under investigation. (Smoliy 2007, 636)

However, despite all obstacles and barriers, some peasants and town inhabitants found their way to Kyiv and other large cities. Russian writer Vasily Grossman, who visited Kyiv for three days in 1933 and was an eyewitness of the Holodomor, wrote:

All the stations were surrounded by guards. All the trains were searched. Everywhere along the roads were roadblocks—troops, NKVD.<sup>6</sup> Yet despite all this the peasants made their way into Kiev. They would crawl through the fields, through empty lots, through the swamps, through the woods—anywhere to bypass the roadblocks set up for them. They were unable to walk; all they could do was crawl. (Grossman 1970, 162)

Based on eyewitnesses' memories, historian Andrei Borisovich Zubov gives an account similar to Grossman's:

Kyivans recalled how crowds of peasants swollen from starvation filled the city streets, where they hoped to find a job and receive ration cards. Only a few succeeded in this. The rest were dying in hundreds. They were lying down under the open sky. The special police units caught the peasants. They threw them in trucks and took them outside the city. (Zubov 2016, 190)

### **The Indifference of Kyivans to Starving and Dying People**

Grossman described the Kyivans' indifference to the suffering of the starving newcomers: "People hurried about on their affairs, some going to work, some to the movies, and streetcars were running—and there were the starving children, old men, girls, crawling about among them on all fours. They were like mangy dogs and cats of some kind" (1970, 162). The indifference of Kyivans toward the starving and dying people on the street was also observed by an American journalist, correspondent of

the Yiddish daily *Forverts* (Forward), Harry Lang (Klid and Motyl 2012, 117). He visited Kyiv in the fall 1933 during the Jewish high holidays. He wrote:

The main street of the city, the famous Krestchatik [Khreshchatyk], told a harrowing tale of famine at the first glance. It was early in the morning. The sidewalks were crowded, thousands marching to work carrying their rations of coarse black bread. It was their breakfast—at which they nibbled on their way....

Suddenly I saw a woman, still young, drop to the ground. She had an empty basket in her hands, and the basket rolled down the sidewalk. Her arms were convulsed for a moment, then they stretched out. Her eyes opened wide once or twice, then they closed. Her head shook fitfully, then it hit the stone pavement, and relax into stillness.

The passerby kept marching. Not one of them turned around. My first thought was that the woman had slipped and fallen by accident. I made a move to help her rise. With me was a man from my hotel. He quickly stopped me:

*“Don’t! Under no circumstances should you go! It is not fitting for you, a visitor, a foreigner, to intervene.”* (Klid and Motyl 2012, 130)

### Rations and the “Commercial” Stores

There were several reasons why Kyivans showed such indifference toward the starving people on the streets. The main reason was that the majority of Kyivans barely had enough food for themselves and had nothing to share with the newcomers. Robert Conquest wrote:

As early as the summer of 1932 office workers’ rations in Kiev were cut from one pound to half a pound of bread a day, industrial workers from two to one-and-a-half pounds. Students at the Kiev Institute of Animal Husbandry got a ration of 200 grammes of ersatz bread a day, plus a plate of fish broth, sauerkraut, two spoonfuls of kasha or cabbage, and fifty grammes of horsemeat. (1986, 248)

In Kyiv, so-called “commercial” stores were opened that began to sell unrationed bread at high prices: “The lines were half a kilometer in length the night before the stores even opened” (Grossman 1970, 161). The people who stood in these lines

... held onto the belts of those ahead and clung for dear life. If one person stumbled, the whole line would shake and quaver as if the wave had passed along it.... Now and then, some young hoodlums would break into the line. They would look for the places where the links in the chain were weakest. And when the hoodlums came near, everyone would start to howl again with the fear.... They were city people standing there in line for unrationed “commercial” bread—deprived people, non-Party people, craftsmen—or else people from the suburbs. Many of them were people who had been refused ration cards ... the greatest number of corpses were near the unrationed “commercial” bread stores. A swollen, starving person would eat a crust and it would finish him off. (Grossman 1970, 161–163)

Many newcomers arrived in Kyiv in such a horrible condition that nobody could help them. Grossman wrote, “They lay starving on the ground, and they sputtered and begged but were unable to eat. A crust might lie right next to them, but they couldn’t see it, and they lay dying” (Grossman 1970, 162).

Naum Korzhavin (2007) describes that one day in their yard a woman lay down swollen from famine. Korzhavin’s uncle asked Naum’s father to tell the woman that she should leave their yard, because the police strictly persecuted the inhabitants if they allowed the homeless to stay in their yards. Somebody suggested that woman was Jewish and did not understand Russian, so Korzhavin’s father tried to talk to her in Yiddish. But it was too late, the woman died in a few minutes (Korzhavin 2007, 60).

### The Attempts to Help

The fear of police persecution for providing aid to the starving newcomers was another reason for the indifference of Kyivans to the suffering of starving homeless people. Soviet propaganda declared that these peoples were *kulaks* (*kurkuls* in Ukrainian), class enemies, and many were afraid to provide them any aid, which could cast police suspicions upon themselves. However, despite this, some people made attempts to help the starving. Russian writer Vladimir Tendriakov describes in his autobiographical story *Khleb dla sobaki* (*Bread for a Dog*, written in 1969–1970) that when he was a nine-year-old boy in 1933, he tried to help to starving people. Despite Soviet propaganda, he began to feel compassion for the *kulaks* and *lishentsy* exiled to his town. Vladimir secretly brought them a few slices of bread or a few potatoes from his parents. Vladimir's father was a judge and he received good rations. So Tendriakov's family did not starve. However, Vladimir was ashamed that he was well fed while people around him were starving. So, he decided to share his food with the most miserable starving people. He helped one starving man, and the next day to his house came two starving people. When he helped two, five came. They patiently waited for the boy under his house and begged him for bread. Unable to help five people, Vladimir cried, screamed at them, and chased them away. Tendriakov said that he was in hysterics from the despair that he was unable to help. For a while he could not eat nor sleep well, but with time he found a cure for his guilty conscience: he began to feed a stray dog, calming himself by the thought that this dog is the most miserable creature in his entire town. Tendriakov said that he really fed by bread not the dog, but his guilty conscience.

There were also other attempts to help the starving. Anna Appelbaum wrote:

There is anecdotal evidence that some Ukrainian peasants had help from their Jewish neighbors.... Mariia Havrysh in Vinnytsia province remembered being visited by a Jewish neighbor ... at a time when she was ill, swollen and expecting to die. The woman came over, prepared a meal and fed the whole family, leaving them with some bread and vodka as well, "thus saving the whole family." (Applebaum 2017, 265–266)

My distant relative Boris Zakharovich Tkachuk (Shteinberg) was professor of mathematics at Lubny Pedagogical Institute in the 1930s. During the famine, he often sent students to his home pretending that he had forgot something there and asked them to bring him a book. He had an agreement with his wife that if he sent some student, she should feed him or her. So, the students did not leave without a meal.<sup>7</sup>

Tkachuk was arrested and executed as a counter-revolutionary in 1937. Among other accusations, he was reported to have criticized the policy of collectivization. During his interrogation, witness U. K. Moroz stated that Tkachuk had "compared the welfare of the workers and collective farmers in our country and the situation abroad, and had said with anger that we have nothing, and that in 1933 millions perished from famine. [This conversation took place in the fall of 1934]."<sup>8</sup>

### The Holodomor and Criminal Situation in Kyiv

The hunger created new kind a crime. People stole food to survive. Lang was eyewitness to one of such case in Kyiv:

Basin st. was the headquarters of these "bandits." It also was the stamping ground of veterans of the Red Army, a ghastly collection of cripples and invalids pursuing unsavory affairs. The two parties were in alliance. The cripples acted as spotters, the street wolves carried out the open robberies.

I saw a woman carrying away food from the "open market" in Basin st. The street wolves prefer to attack women. One of them swooped down upon her and bit her arm. She dropped her food and shrieked. The "bandit" snatched his loot and fled. A crowd formed quickly, but

no one even tried to catch the thief. The policeman who came up to comfort the woman remarked:

“It’s the hunger that’s driving them on.” (Klid and Motyl 2012, 131)

Hunger changed people’s morals, and they would do anything to survive. Some prisoners behaved similarly in the Nazi concentration camps. There were many hungry, embittered people in Kyiv. They felt that a human life was worth nothing in the Soviet Union, and that they could only help themselves.

There were also some open sadists who exercised their power over the starving newcomers. Grossman testified that he saw how a janitor kicked a young girl, “and she slid into the street. She didn’t even look back. She just kept crawling along swiftly, trying to find the strength to go on” (Grossman 1970, 163). Perhaps it was not the first time that the girl had been kicked on the street and she had gotten used to such brutality.

### The Holodomor Death Rate

The famine in the Soviet Union had begun in fall 1932 and continued at least until fall 1933. The Lang’s, who visited the Soviet Union in September 1933, wrote about hunger in Moscow, Leningrad, Kyiv, Minsk, and Korostyshev, as well as in rural areas. They were eyewitnesses of the death from starvation of people in Kyiv and Korostyshev, and they saw children swollen from hunger in Ukrainian villages (Klid and Motyl 2012, 130; Robins Lang 1948, 257–269). According to recent demographic research, Holodomor losses were “estimated at 4.5 million, with 3.9 million excess deaths and 0.6 million lost births. Rural and urban excess deaths are equivalent to 16.5 and 4.0 per cent of respective 1933 populations” (Rudnytskyi et al. 2015, 53; Levchuk et al. 2015, 84–112). There are no statistics available on the Holodomor losses by nationality, so it is unknown how many Jews perished during the Holodomor in Kyiv and Ukraine. According to official reports, in February 1933 in Kyiv streets, 918 corpses of Jews who had died from the famine were picked up (Naiman 1995, 221). The total number of Jewish famine victims in Kyiv was certainly much higher than 918 people. Grossman wrote,

In the morning horses pulled flattop carts through the city, and the corpses of those who had died in the night were collected. I saw one of such flattop cart with children lying on it. They were just as I have described them, thin, elongated faces, like those of dead birds, with sharp beaks. These tiny birds had flown into Kiev and what good had it done them? Some of them were still muttering, and their heads were still turning. I asked the driver about them, and he just waved his hands and said: “By the time they get where they are being taken they will be silent too.” (1970, 162–163)

Grossman wrote that on the same day when he saw the carts with dead and dying children, he purchased a Moscow newspaper where was published

... an article by Maxim Gorky in which he said that children needed cultural toys. Are we to suppose that Maxim Gorky did not know about those children being hauled off on a flattop cart drawn by dray horses? What kind of toys did they need? But perhaps he did know, too, for that matter. And perhaps he, too, kept silent, like all the rest. (1970, 162–163)

It was naïve to anticipate truthful publications about the hunger in the Soviet press; censorship never would allow it. William Reswick, who was an American correspondent in Moscow in the 1920s–1930s recalled in his book *I Dreamt Revolution* how one day he met his friend Vitya, staff writer for *Pravda*, on Strasnoy Boulevard (Reswick 1952, 308).<sup>9</sup> Reswick wrote that Vitya

... had the look of a man reeling under the impact of a heavy blow. Without a word Vitya sank to a bench and drew from his pocket a mangled letter.

"Read it," he said. "It's from my father."

I glanced at the envelope. It was stamped Shmerinka [Zhmerinka]—a town in the Kiev Province. The letter read:

My beloved son,

This is to let you know that your mother is dead. She died from starvation after months of pain. I, too, am on the way, like many others in our town. Occasionally we managed to snatch some crumbs, but not enough to keep us alive much longer, unless they send in food from the center. There is none for hundreds of miles around here. Your mother's last wish was that you, our only son, say *Kadish*<sup>10</sup> for her ...

[Then Vitya] broke down and wept like a child, oblivious of the curious pedestrians.... When Vitya finally calmed down he struggled to his feet. "Well," he said, "it's time to go to the office and write another editorial denouncing the capitalist press for spreading lies about our non-existent famine. It's that or suicide." (1952, 308–309)

Harry Lang's eyewitness account suggested that the Holodomor took many Jewish lives in Kyiv and was a real calamity for the Jewish community. Lang wrote:

It was the season of the Jewish new year. I visited the central synagogue. It was crowded with the thousands of worshippers, despite the threats of persecution by the Communist godless society.

There is a special Jewish prayer which enumerates all the known forms of death. Its text contains a reference to death from famine. While I was in the synagogue, the man officiating at the services recited that prayer. When he came to the words, "And he that dies from hunger," he repeated the last word three times with burning anguish. Thousands of Jews sobbed and cried after him:

"Hunger, hunger, hunger!" (Klid and Motyl 2012, 130–131)

Usually nobody emphasizes these words so much during the prayer. This shows their special meaning for Kyivan Jews. A Jewish woman told Lang that her children were starving during Passover. At that time a rabbi whose children were swollen from hunger came to her home and asked her if she has a little bit of bran to cook something like matzah for both her and his children (Lang 2011, 187).

According to Lang's evidence, one of the Kyivan cemeteries had a special section for those who died from hunger in 1932–1933, where Lang saw hundreds of fresh graves. Perhaps there were also similar sections at the other Kyivan cemeteries. Lang wrote:

I went to one of the Kiev cemeteries which had a special famine section. As far as the eye could see, hundreds of new graves stretched before me. They held the victims of starvation of part of 1932 and part of 1933. They were like the graves which follow a war or an epidemic. There were no headstones, only wooden sticks with numbers.

During the critical famine months, there were scores of daily burials. Sometimes the corpses would lie in the open on the grass for days until their turn came to be interred. (Klid and Motyl 2012, 131)

Lang said that he saw at the cemetery many people who "begged the dead for bread" (Klid and Motyl 2012, 131). Some even asked the dead to take them away with them, to end their sufferings. Lang wrote, "The entire cemetery was peopled with such scenes" (Klid and Motyl 2012, 132). Many were so exhausted from their sufferings that they preferred death to such a horrible life.

### The Holodomor and the World: The Aid from Abroad

The Soviet government continued to export grain during the famine in the Soviet Union. Foreign organizations proposed aid, but the Soviet authorities rejected it and denied that there was famine.

The Soviets did not allow most foreign correspondents to visit Ukraine and the North Caucasus during the famine (Conquest 1986, 310). But the truth was leaking out: through eyewitnesses' accounts, personal correspondence, reports of foreign diplomats and the publications of a few journalists who somehow obtained permission to travel to the starving regions. Perhaps for a few journalists who represented socialist foreign periodicals, an exception was made from the general rule, and they could travel to different regions, because the Soviets anticipated that they would write favorable articles about the construction of socialism in the Soviet Union, despite the presence of the famine.

American journalist Harry Lang obtained a journalist visa to the Soviet Union in September 1933, with the help of the US Senator William E. Borah, who fought for many years for the establishment of diplomatic relations with the USSR. Lang and his wife Lucy Robins Lang received permission, unique at that time, to visit not only Russia, but also Ukrainian and Belorussian cities and villages (Robins Lang 1948, 257). Both were born in the Russian Empire in 1884, Harry in Lithuania and Lucy in Kyiv. Lucy immigrated to the US in 1893, Harry in 1904. Both Harry and Lucy knew Russian and Yiddish and spoke with the people in the Soviet Union without a translator (Lang 2011, 176).

Because Lang was a member of the Socialist Party, the Soviets anticipated from him positive publications about his travel experiences. Lang came to the communist country with great expectations but was shocked by the Soviet reality. Lang wrote:

My trip to Soviet Russia was part of a world's tour which took a year and included 19 countries. As a Socialist, as a lover of freedom, and as a Jew, I went to Russia full of fervent expectations. I came out crushed, shell-shocked. Nowhere did I see suffering on such a titanic scale. Nowhere did I find the tragedy of a great people so effectively concealed behind a conspiracy of silence. (Klid and Motyl 2012, 134)

After his return to the U.S. Lang wrote around 30 articles about his trip, which were published in *Forverts* and the *New York Evening Journal* in November 1933–1935. However, American socialists were not pleased with Lang's depiction of Soviet life. For these articles, "Lang was expelled from the Socialist Party and almost lost his job at the *Forward*" (Klid and Motyl 2012, 117).

Not only American Socialists, but also some politicians in different countries refused to believe in the famine in the Soviet Union or tried to downplay it for various political reasons. After a staged visit to Ukraine in the late summer 1933, the former French Prime Minister Edouard Herriot "denounced reports of the famine as Nazi propaganda" (Klid and Motyl 2012, 98). The United States did not have diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union until November 1933. However,

... the State Department was under instructions to establish such relations—a political move in which reports of the terror-famine were regarded by the Administration as unhelpful. The foreign diplomatic corps actually in Moscow was not deceived, the British Embassy, for example, reporting to London that conditions in the Kuban and the Ukraine were "appalling." (Conquest 1986, 311)

So, many Western politicians knew the truth about the Holodomor at that time, but for various reasons did not want to publicize it.

Kyivans tried to pass the word about the Holodomor to their relatives abroad and to the world. Lang reported that during his trip to the Soviet Union, people asked him many times to tell the truth in America about their lives (Klid and Motyl 2012, 135). When Lang visited a Kyiv cemetery, a grave digger came to him and started a conversation: "You are looking at our fresh graves?" he said. "You see, Kiev has also made its contribution to the second five-year plan. Tell my brothers in America about it" (Klid and Motyl 2012, 131).

What was behind this black humor? Perhaps the grave digger hoped for some aid from abroad. Sometimes such aid from relatives could save lives. Thus, Naum Korzhavin describes that he and his parents did not starve during the Holodomor due to the help of their relatives from abroad

(Korzhavin 2007, 58). People who had hard currency could buy food in the Torgsin stores. The All Union Association for Trade with Foreigners (Torgsin) functioned in the Soviet Union in 1931–1936. Torgsin stores sold food to foreigners and Soviet citizens for hard currency, or exchanged food for gold, silver, and precious stones. The Soviet authorities used Torgsin stores to raise more currency for industrialization. Some emigrants sent hard currency to their relatives in the Soviet Union. Elena Osokina wrote:

... money transfers to Belorussia and Ukraine were mostly Jewish, it was the aid from those who left from these regions to the US and Canada before the revolution.... In 1932–1933 more than half the money (60 percent) from the US came from New York City. Significant help, also mostly Jewish money, came from Poland and the Near East. (Osokina 2009, 163)

Korzhavin wrote that Torgsin stores “had everything, including meat and sausages,” but his family could afford to purchase there “only a little bit of butter and a little bit of porridge” (Korzhavin 2007, 58). However, not all Jewish families had relatives abroad, which fomented jealousy among their Jewish and gentile neighbors. Soon this help from relatives abroad was turned against the people who received it. Lang reported that during his visit to Kyiv, that he spoke with a Jew who worked at OGPU. He told Lang that the “dollar inquisition” mostly affected Jews, because the OGPU believed that Jews had connections with their relatives abroad. So, the OGPU arrested many Jews and demanded a ransom in dollars (they did not take rubles) from their families for their liberation. Lang wrote that fear ruled over Kyiv in 1933. Those who had been arrested at least once by the OGPU “don’t go to sleep without putting near their bed a packet with underwear and piece of bread,” because they awaited a new arrest, and nobody knew when they would be arrested again (Lang 2011, 188).

On the first night of Rosh ha-Shana (Jewish New Year), police arrested an elderly rabbi and his wife in Kyiv. Lang was an eyewitness of some Kyivan Jews walking from door to door and begging Jews to give some money for the liberation of the rabbi and his wife. By the next morning, the Jews had gathered 70 dollars; the OGPU wanted more, but were satisfied with this sum, and the rabbi and his wife were released (Lang 2011, 188–190). Lang wrote that the OGPU members kept for themselves only part of the seized dollars and the rest was shared with the local authorities (Lang 2011, 189–190).

Trying to get the attention of Americans to this problem, Lang published his article “Soviets Seized Cash Sent by U.S. Kin to Starving Russians” in the *New York Evening Journal* on April 23, 1935. He wrote:

The G.P.U.<sup>11</sup> then launched an organized campaign to extort the American dollars as a source of government revenue.

This “Dollar Inquisition” caused the American Jewish Congress, led by Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, to call meetings of protest.

The Hebrew poet laureate in Palestine, Chaim Nachman Bialik, had gathered a mass of authentic evidence proving conclusively that the G.P.U. was terrorizing all the Jewish communities in Russia, imprisoning people just because they had relatives in America, and holding them as hostages until ransom arrived. (Klid and Motyl 2012, 134)

I recorded similar stories when I interviewed several elderly Jews in town Korosten’ in 1997.<sup>12</sup> They told me that in the 1930s, the local Soviet authorities arrested many local Jews and demanded from their families ransom, claiming that all Jews had either gold or silver, or relatives abroad. If the relatives of the arrested Jews could not find ransom fast enough, the arrested often were beaten and tortured until their relatives delivered the required sum.

Khandros provided similar evidence regarding the OGPU “golden campaign” in his book. He wrote that some Jews from *shtetl* Ozarintsy traveled to the city Mohyliv-Podilskyi to the Torgsin store to exchange gold for some food. Khandros wrote, “But the Torgsin was also a trap for those

who paid with at least one golden coin. Such a ‘client’ was immediately put on a special list, and later ended up in the ‘golden room’ of the OGPU” (Khandros 2000, 67). Ozarinsty’s butcher and shepherd Moishe Kats was arrested by the OGPU and put in a prison cell where were so many people that was not possible to sit or lie down, but only stand. Kats stood for four days, his legs swollen. Then he admitted that he had a secret place where he hid some tsarist gold coins (Khandros 2000, 67).

Later, during the political repressions of the second half of the 1930s to 1953, many of those who received aid from abroad and were in correspondence with their relatives abroad were arrested as spies of foreign intelligence services.

### **Relations Between Jews and Non-Jews in Kyiv**

Jewish-gentile relations were quite complicated in Kyiv in the interwar period. There was a well-established anti-Semitic tradition in the city, as shown by the pogroms of 1881, 1905, during the civil war, and by the Beilis Affair (1911–1913). From prerevolutionary times, there were also Judeophile Russian and Ukrainian intelligentsia, but many gentiles in Kyiv were prejudiced against Jews. The Holodomor badly affected relations between Jews and gentiles in Kyiv before and during World War II. It made the prejudice against Jews even stronger. Participation of a member of the Soviet Politburo, Lazar Kaganovich (Jewish by nationality), in the organization of the Holodomor, along with Josef Stalin, Vyacheslav Molotov, P. P. Postyshev, S. V. Kosior, V. Ya. Chubar, and M. M. Khataievich, allowed anti-Semites to claim that the Jews organized the genocide in Ukraine in 1932–1933. Of course, anti-Semites did not admit that many Jews starved and died during the Holodomor in Ukraine along with the rest of population.

Famine increased the tension in the city between Kyivans and newcomers. Korzhavin wrote that native Kyivans did not like the uneducated and rude newcomers, and many newcomers—Ukrainian peasants—did not like Kyivans, who lived better than them, especially the Jews (2007, 95–100). Kyivans lived in communal apartments, while the newcomers settled in the basements of the apartment buildings. According to Korzhavin, the place of living became the indicator of the social and cultural status of the person. Peasants felt a disrespectful attitude toward themselves in Kyiv (Korzhavin 2007, 100). Korzhavin pointed out:

But these people, who had self-esteem, who were before the owners of farms, had gotten used to being respected. In their eyes, a city was a place from which all their calamities came, from which all these collectivizers and dekulakizers came ...

And now this city, which had destroyed their world, made senseless their labor, expelled them from their houses and villages, in addition to all, yet arrogantly towered above them ....

For these recent peasants, Jews were the extreme embodiment of the city, which had abused them. (Korzhavin 2007, 100)

Jews felt this hostile attitude of some gentiles and had “bad premonitions of how these people would behave during a war” (Korzhavin 2007, 95). Thus, the hostility between Jews and gentiles existed before the war; however Soviet authorities suppressed anti-Semitism in the 1920s and 1930s. The Bolsheviks declared anti-Semitism to be a shameful remnant of the tsarist regime. So, anti-Semites were afraid to attack Jews openly, as the attackers could be blamed for counter-revolutionary activities and would be persecuted as “enemies of the people.” Popular anti-Semitism was usually limited in the interwar years to personal insults of Jews and did not typically acquire a violent character. This suppressed anti-Semitism exploded during the war under the encouragement of the Nazis, who depicted all Jews as Bolsheviks and exploiters of the gentile population. The Nazis and their local collaborators also blamed Jews for causing the famine in Ukraine and claimed that Jews had not suffered from the famine themselves. The newspaper *Vidrodzhennia*, which was published under Nazi rule in occupied Ukraine, wrote on December 6, 1942: “Only one part of the

population did not feel the famine. Those were the Jews. They calmly used the services of ‘Torgsin,’ in whose stores there was everything one could want, including produce. But it could only be bought with gold and foreign currency. And the Jews lacked neither gold nor dollars” (Berkhoff 2008, 166). Similar publications, which blamed Jews for the famine, appeared in *Dnipropetrov’s’ka hazeta* during the Nazi occupation of Ukraine (Berkhoff 2008, 166).

Kyivan Valentin Terno “recalled seeing in Kyiv … in the summer of 1942 a feature film in Ukrainian called *Ostannii udar* (*The Last Blow*), about the collectivization and famine” (Berkhoff 2008, 167). Terno described the film “as fiercely anti-Semitic, it showed corpses of famine victims and ended with the killing of a Jewish NKVD officer” (Berkhoff 2008, 167).

Anatolii Kuznetsov wrote in *Babi Yar: A Document in the Form of a Novel* (1970) that people who lived in the Soviet Union during the Holodomor and the Stalin repressions of the 1930s got used to being silent. They knew that any protest could cost them their lives. When the repressive Soviet system was replaced by the Nazis, and the Nazis killed Jews in Babi Yar, the rest of the Kyivan population remained silent and indifferent (Anatoli [Kuznetsov] 1970, 359–360). Kyivans got used to seeing dying people on the streets during the Holodomor, and they got used to the disappearance of their neighbors and friends during Stalin’s repression. If they had remained silent previously, it would be naïve to anticipate that they would have more compassion for Jews during the Holocaust.

## Conclusion

The Holodomor badly affected all the population of Ukraine. In rural areas, the death rate was higher, but in the Ukrainian cities and towns many thousands also died from starvation. Among the victims of the Holodomor were people of all nationalities who lived in Ukraine.

Jews starved and died during the Holodomor in Kyiv, in provincial cities and towns, and in the agricultural settlements. Unfortunately, the subject of the Holodomor and Jews has not yet received the attention it deserves by historians. Most histories describe the first half of the 1930s as a period of development of Soviet Jewish cultural and educational institutions, and a flourishing of Yiddish culture in the Soviet Union.<sup>13</sup> But these institutions were just official “cultural toys,” while many Jews were actually starving and dying from hunger. Hungry people could not utilize these cultural and educational institutions. My paternal grandmother Dvoira Feldman studied in the early 1930s in a Jewish college in the town Belaia Tserkov’. She told me that she never starved so severely as in those years. She had to quit her education, because she fainted from hunger during her classes. She managed somehow to escape to Kyiv during or soon after the famine, where her eldest brother lived. He helped her establish her life in the new place.

The Holodomor embittered many people, made them indifferent to the suffering of others, and created more tension between Jews and gentiles in Kyiv and Ukraine. In this way, the Holodomor prepared the ground for the Holocaust of Jews in Kyiv.

During the Holodomor and the Holocaust, the same repressive mechanisms operated: the dehumanization of enemies and starving them to the death (during the Holocaust the Nazis used these methods in the ghettos and concentration camps). However, the ultimate goals of these two genocides were different: the suppression of resistance to collectivization during the Holodomor versus the extermination of the entire Jewish people during the Holocaust. But, by suppressing the peasants’ resistance to collectivization, the Soviets also starved much of the population. Despite this, the Soviets never achieved efficient agriculture, and there were frequent food shortages throughout Soviet rule.

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## Notes

- 1 Dekulakization was the Soviet campaign of repression, including confiscation of property, arrests, exile, and executions of millions of prosperous peasants and their families from 1929 to 1932.
- 2 Bragin's report is perhaps mistakenly dated 1922, because the author mentioned there several times the USSR, which was created on December 30, 1922. It may have been written in the last days of 1922 or in 1923.
- 3 The bold script is in Bragin's original report.
- 4 There were 41,617 Jews in the town in 1897 (approximately 80% of the population).
- 5 NEP (The New Economic Policy) was a Soviet economic policy from 1921 to 1928. The NEP allowed a free market and small private businesses under state control.
- 6 People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD) was organized in July 1934 and was the successor to the OGPU. In 1933 the political police were called OGPU.
- 7 Zirka Borisovna Tkachuk, daughter of Boris Tkachuk, told me this story in 1991. She was ten years old in 1933 and remembered well how her mother fed the hungry students.
- 8 Galuzevyi Derzhavnyi Arkhiv Sluzhby Bezpeky Ukrainskogo SSR, Fond NKVD USSR, File # 8731 About the accusation of Tkachuk Boris Zakharovich in the crimes according article 54-10 of the Criminal Law of the USSR.
- 9 William Reswick published his book *I Dreamt Revolution* in 1952, when it is possible his friend still was alive. He does not provide his last name so as to not create serious problems for his friend.
- 10 *Kadish* is part of the mourning rituals in Judaism.
- 11 The correct name of the organization was OGPU.
- 12 I recorded interviews with the Korosten' Jewish community members in April 1997.
- 13 Kyiv was one of the two largest centers of Yiddish culture in the Soviet Union in the interwar period (the other was Minsk). The large concentration of Jews in the city was conducive to the rise of Jewish scholarly and cultural life. Several Jewish cultural and scholarly institutions worked in Kyiv in the 1920s and 1930s: the Jewish Historical-Archaeographical Commission (1919–1929), the Institute of Jewish Proletarian Culture (1929–1936), and the Department of Jewish Language, Literature and Folklore of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences (brief title, the Department of Jewish Culture) (1936–1949). Many scholars who worked in these institutions were subsequently imprisoned, and some were executed during the repression of the 1930s–1940s.

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